

Sermon Fourteen

And to the angel of the church at Thyatira write: These are the words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like fine brass. I know your works, your faith, and love, and ministry, and patience; and your last works are more than your former ones. But I have this against you, that you permit the woman Jezabel, who calls herself a prophet, to teach and lead my servants astray to fornicate and to eat food sacrificed to idols. I gave her time to repent, but she is not willing to repent of her fornication. And behold, I will cast her on a bed, and those who commit adultery with her will be in very great distress unless they repent of their deeds. And I shall put her children to death, and all the churches will know that I am the one who searches loins and hearts, and I shall give to each of you as your works deserve. But to the rest of you at Thyatira I say: Those who do not hold this teaching, who have not known what some call the 'deep things of Satan', I will not lay any other burden upon you. Only hold fast to what you have until I come. And to the one who conquers and keeps my works until the end, I will give authority over the nations, and he will rule them with an iron rod, and they will be broken like a potter's jar, even as I have received from my Father,

and I will give him the morning star. Let anyone who has an ear hear what the Spirit says to the churches.[†]

TRv 2:18-29

TRv 2:18

TRv 1:15

TRv 1:13

TRv 2:18

Jn 1:12

Jn 1:18

11 Co 2:10-11

TRv 5:6

AND TO THE ANGEL OF THE CHURCH at Thyatira write.[†] Beloved, this brotherhood of yours ought to keep in mind that we said that Thyatira is interpreted 'enlightened'¹ or 'living sacrifice'.² We should notice that from the many things that blessed John saw as foretold of each, he told different things to different angels, but to each one of them he told what was appropriate. Thus to the angel of Thyatira he makes special mention of the eyes and feet, comparing them to a flame of fire and, as before, to fine brass.[†] From those eyes we have enlightenment, and we can also liken those feet to a living sacrifice.

No one can doubt that he is writing of 'the one like the Son of Man' who appeared in the midst of the lampstands[†] when he says to this angel: *These are the words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like fine brass.*[†] The Son of God not only condescended to appear as Son of Man for people's edification, but genuinely to become so, that he may give to those who received him power to share his sonship.[†] He did not refuse a humble form and to live among humans as a human when he deigned to be seen on earth, so that those who are only human may fear to be raised above him by their own presumption and arrogance. For the same reason the Lord of majesty shows the likeness of truth itself, and the truth of that likeness, to his faithful people, to whom, and when, and how he wishes. To edify them, and through them a multitude of others, as in the present case, he tells them he is the Son of God, and orders it believed and written.

And what then, my brothers? Will we ignore what the only-begotten Son of God, who is close to the Father's heart,[†] tells us? Will we ignore what the Spirit, who knows what is God's, who searches even the depths of God,[†] says to the churches? As Scripture testifies, the Son of God is also the Lamb of God, having seven eyes which are the seven spirits of God.[†]

¹Jerome, *Liber interpretationis hebraicorum nominum* 72.8; CCh 72:149.

²Venerable Bede, *Explanatio Apocalypsis* 1.2; PL 93:139B.

I know your works.[†] He commends their way of life, which is self-controlled, upright, and godly,[†] because faith is working through love[†] in them. Therefore he adds, *your faith and love.* Works without faith, and faith without works,[†] are unacceptable to God, nor is he pleased by either faith or works apart from love. Work is the effect, faith the root, and love the life and the strength of both.

The words that follow, *and ministry*,[†] some experts³ take to mean almsgiving, in light of the Apostle's words, 'concerning the ministry being accomplished for the saints'.[†] As included among these works, however, ministry seems to pertain more properly to a prelate's office, in which one who ministers well gains a good standing.[†] Deservedly does he recall that he knows and confirms this ministry after works, and faith, and especially after love, the greatest of all. Examples of works are required for the dull and hard-hearted, so that whatever the Lord's minister teaches his disciples is inopportune he will show by his deeds is not to be done.[†] He not only needs faith to believe with his heart unto justification,[†] but an increase of faith, a fullness of faith, that he may be ready to give an account of his work[†] to the One who is all-demanding.⁴ He needs faithfulness, as it says, 'Now it is required of stewards that one be found faithful'.[†] Especially is no ordinary love needed by one about to undertake the ministry of pastoral care, in accord with what the Lord said to Peter, 'Do you love me more than these? Feed my sheep'.[†]

In carrying this out, patience is needed in many different circumstances. That a person's learning is known by his patience[†] is not hidden from those who have tried it. How arduous and difficult a task it is to serve a variety of temperaments![†] What soothes one increases the irritation of another. Certainly if everyone who wants to live a godly life[†] will have to endure persecution, how much more will those whose duty it is to teach many others to live in a godly way sometimes urge and even compel some. In truth, Paul, the Lord showed you, as he had promised Ananias, how much you

³Pseudo-Alcuin, *Commentariorum in Apocalypsin libri quinque* 2.1; PL 100:1106C. Richard of Saint Victor, *In Apocalypsim Iohannis libri septem* 1.8; PL 196:725C.

⁴*Omnipotenti.*

TRv 2:19

1Ti 2:12

1Ga 5:6

Jm 2:20

TRv 2:19

12 Co 9:1

11 Tm 3:13

TRB 2:12-13

TRm 10:10

TRB 2:37

11 Co 4:2

Jn 21:15, 17

1Pr 19:11

TRB 2:31

12 Tm 3:12

1Ac 9:16
11 Co 9:22
12 Co 11:29

had to suffer for the sake of his name[†] while you were becoming patient in all things to all people.[†] As you said, 'Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I am not indignant?'

TRv 2:19

Moreover, the one to whom what follows applies is most fortunate: *and your last works are more than your former ones.*[†] Nowadays not all of those holding a prelate's office—I wish there were more!—move beyond their former good works, especially when the scandals current now are tolerated.

TRv 2:20

But I have this against you.[†] O most kind God, why do you stand in the adversary position? Why have something against one whose works please you, whose faith you approve, whose love you accept? Do you approve his ministry, yet still have something against him? By patience he is in possession of his soul,[†] and do you still have a complaint against him?[†] Is he judged not to be going forward lest he later be found wanting? Are you saying that his *last works are more than his former ones*,[†] and yet not keeping silent, not holding back, that you have something against him?

1Elk 21:19
1Col 3:13

TRv 2:19

A life where there is no freedom from care, where no matter how hard a person works to avoid faults of his own he still has to fear the faults of others,[†] is a wretched life! And yet we love this poor life, a Delilah to our Samson. Do we want to escape this miserable life? Do we weep as life comes to a close, poor in all that is good, but rich in hurts, in dangers, even in crimes?

TPs 18:13
Vulgate

TRv 2:18

11eb 4:13

TRv 2:20

Listen to the statement against this priest of Thyatira made by the one to whose eyes as to a *flame of fire*[†] all things are naked and open.[†] *You permit the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet, to teach and lead my servants astray.*[†] I doubt that the false prophet was named Jezebel; rather she deserved the name of Israel's worst queen for imitating her evil ways. The first Jezebel punished the Lord's prophets by physical death, but this one was doing all in her power to lead his servants astray by pernicious examples and reasonings. Since the name Jezebel means 'pouring blood and dung',⁵ this prophet is called that because of her abounding iniquity and impurity.

1Ps 19:12

He is said to permit her presence doubtless because he could have prohibited it. Beloved, who can understand offenses?[†] He

⁵Jerome, *Liber interpretationis hebraicorum nominum* 80:20; CCh 72:160.

indeed whose eyes are like a flame of fire.[†] We are not to believe that this priest, whose works, and faith, and love are commended, would have approved such depravity. We are not to believe that he hesitated to give correction, for his ministry is applauded. But perhaps his patience, rightly praised in the case of other afflictions, led him to oppose this one less strongly, and, fearing excessive severity, he fell into the fault of too great lenience. Thus Eli,[†] once the Lord's priest, perished when he spared his own sinful sons. Although he rebuked them verbally, he never punished them by depriving them of their priestly earnings, barring them from the altar, or removing them from office.

TRv 2:18

11 S 2:12, 4:18;
R.B. 2:26

Some have thought that this woman was the priest's wife.⁶ If true, the rebuke would have been stronger and the language clearer. For how could such a man have knowingly kept an adulteress, much less a blasphemer and heretic? Would she not have been warned once and twice, and then been avoided by all the faithful?[†] Wisely does Paul prohibit women from speaking in the churches when he says, 'Let them ask their own husbands at home',[†] 'At home', not in public; 'let them ask', not presume to teach; ask 'their husbands', not themselves; 'their own', not any husband at all.

11 Co 5:11

11 Co 14:35

And what of you, O illustrious region of Gaul? Why have you of late spurned and despised your ancient privileged reputation: 'Gaul alone had no monsters'?⁷ The principal see of the Gauls, Lyons, created new apostles, and has not blushed to bring women into that circle. These vixens⁸ went forth to ravage the Lord's vineyard. Contemptible and worthless, they usurped the preacher's office. They are altogether or almost without education, or rather without the Spirit, in accord with the text, 'Natural beings, not having the Spirit'.[†] They go around cities and villages pretending poverty and looking for opportunities to preach, impudently eating others' bread without working with their own hands. They sharpen their

Jude 19

⁶Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiarum libri XX* 8.5.5. Haymo of Auxerre, *Expositionis in Apocalypsin Beati Iohannis libri septem* 1.2; PL 117:978B. Richard of Saint Victor, *In Apocalypsim Iohannis libri septem* 1.8; PL 196:726A.

⁷Jerome, *Contra Vigilantium liber unus* 1; PL 23:339.

⁸*Vulpeculae*. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermones super Cantica Canticum* 64.3.8; SBoP 2:170.

1Ps 140:3

tongues[†] with exquisitely composed words; they are novel parrots, unaware of what they are saying and declaring. The hellebore they use to color, or rather discolor, their words, is insult and railing against the clergy.

12 P 2:22

The founder, Wandesius (from his birthplace), abjured the sect at the Council of Lyons in the presence of our venerable lord and father, Henry, bishop of Aubagne, then serving as legate of the Apostolic See, and Wiscardus of holy memory, archbishop of that church. I myself was present, along with a great multitude of honorable people, mostly priests. For obvious reasons he was convicted of sacrilegious presumption, but he returned to his vomit[†] and did not stop recruiting and sending out disciples. Among them are even wretched women burdened with sins, who make their way into others' households,[†] busybodies and gossips,^{*} shameless, bold, and impudent.

12 Tim 3:6

*1 Tim 5:13

Almost five years ago two of them, with a troop of wicked lackeys, attacked the venerable bishop of Arvenica on his travels with all the vituperation they could muster—as he afterwards told many—insulting him because he had once discovered them preaching in his diocese and forced them to renounce this sect by threats and arguments. And so, blaspheming him shamelessly, they shouted at him, and publicly declared, 'Each day after we preached we feasted elegantly; almost every night we chose new lovers for ourselves. We were responsible to no one, and went through life without cares, without work, without danger. Now, as servant girls we are in daily danger of death, and are miserable, suffering all kinds of hardships'.

15g 3:2

What remains to be said, my brothers? Who has raised up this young Jezabel after a thousand years, to run through the streets and the squares[†] as a preacher-whore? Although this sect has now been excommunicated by bishops, by archbishops, and by the Roman church, for this reason it is the more warmly welcomed and attentively heard by people who find stolen waters sweeter and hidden bread more tasty.[†] For the female sex rather than the male to be convicted of talkativeness and poor choice of words is cheap and common. No wonder that, if on account of its first destructive suggestions the snake was altogether deprived of speech, the woman was in some measure restrained.

1Ps 9:17

I believe that some of our brothers can still be found alive today who listened with me to our blessed father and teacher⁹ praise the nobility of silence, one of her greatest gifts, in Mary, mother of God and greatest of all women. In all the holy gospels we find her words a mere seven times. Many times did she ponder in her heart,[†] but seldom did she speak. Certainly more than these few words would have been written had she said more, especially because her frequent recollection could have brought only the most salutary and important words from such a fullness of the Spirit. We read that she spoke twice to the angel, twice to Elizabeth, twice to her son, and once to the servants at the wedding.

1Lk 2:19

Perplexed and wondering at Gabriel's extraordinary and fitting greeting, she did not immediately speak. She thought, she deliberated, she waited until the angel, proceeding with the mission he had begun, added more important things to what he had first said. At length, answering him with a reverent question, she asked, 'How can this be?'[†] She was asserting that what he was promising regarding conception and childbirth could not happen to her as it happens to other women. When she had attentively heard, faithfully believed, and accepted with fitting desire how it could be, she answered without any further hesitation, 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it done to me according to your word',[†] according, that is, to the way you have told me, and I have found pleasing.

1Lk 1:34

1Lk 1:38

Then, ascending into the hill country, she greeted Elizabeth. At her voice, John, enclosed in the womb, rejoiced with a novel joy.[†] And although she could have been carried away with the great news, she burst out in a song of thanksgiving and praise,[†] magnifying the Lord,[†] and rendering thanks to him as the source of benefits.

1Lk 1:41, 44

1Ps 42:4, Jon

2:9

1Lk 1:46

Then she sought her son in Jerusalem. He was twelve years old in his humanity, for according to his divinity his years neither pass nor pass away.[†] In testimony to his real incarnation she used appropriate maternal authority and said, 'Child, why have you treated

1Ps 102:27

⁹Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermones de diversis* 52.3–4; PL 183.675CD. *Dominica infra octavam Assumptionis* 10; SBOp 5:270.

us like this? Behold, your father and I have been seeking you in sorrow'.[†] And although he spoke of a far different Father,^{*} for his is a two-fold nature, the Lord showed himself obedient[†] to his servants, the Creator to his creatures.

As the mother of mercy at a wedding in Galilee, she pitied the couple's embarrassment and simply suggested to her son, 'They have no wine'.[†] She was content to mention the need for kindness to the One who understands the needy and the poor.[†] The last words of the Virgin in the gospels were addressed to the servants at the wedding. She advised them to keep and to do whatever the Lord might tell them,[†] if he should say something. Excuse me from further explanation, [she said,] because he of whom it was written, 'The voice of the Lord is over the waters, the God of majesty thunders',[†] meets every need. 'Listen to him!'[†] That word had its effect among those servants. When they drew water at the Saviour's command, those who were complaining of the lack of wine filled water jars in place of wine jars, preparing baths in place of drinks. Yet they had not yet tested the power of the one giving the command, for this was the first of his signs.[†]

Perhaps it is not inappropriate to draw a parallel between the seven words of the most holy Virgin and the equal number of gifts of the Holy Spirit.[†] The spirit of the fear of the Lord seems to parallel what she said to the servants: 'Whatever he says to you, keep and do'. As Wisdom teaches, 'One who fears the Lord neglects nothing'.[†] That she interceded mercifully for what the suffering needed corresponds to the spirit of godliness. That she asked with an appropriately motherly voice, 'Son, why have you treated us like this?' and so forth, can perhaps be attributed to the spirit of knowledge, which deals rather with human than with divine matters. In the spirit of might and magnanimity she indicated to Gabriel, who was promising an inviolable conception, her resolve to preserve her virginity: 'How can this be, since I know not man?' She answered him deliberately, then, in the spirit of counsel: 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord'. Her word of greeting was filled with the spirit of understanding, for on hearing it the unborn forerunner recognized the Lord's presence, and his mother the joy of her exultant son. [Elizabeth] understood both Gabriel's announcement

11k 2:48
11k 2:49
11k 2:51

1Jn 2:3
1Ph 4:1

1Jn 2:5

1Mc 2:5

1Jn 2:11

1Is 11:2-3
Vulgate

1Qo 7:19
Vulgate

and the mystery of the Lord's incarnation. The virgin mother's response to her was to exult in God her Jesus,[†] whose name had already been spoken by the angel.[†] In the fullness of the spirit of wisdom, she burst forth in a song to his glory, magnifying him of whom she had heard that 'he will be great',[†] who is truly one with the Father and the Holy Spirit, God, over all and blessed forever. Amen.

11Is 3:18
Vulgate
11k 2:21

11k 1:15

Sermon Fifteen

THE PRIEST OF THE CHURCH AT THYATIRA deserved his rebuke because he permitted a woman with no right to teach in public to instruct the servants of God and even to lead them astray. We see how she led them astray alluded to in the words *to fornicate and to eat food sacrificed to idols*.[†] This is what the children of Israel did in the desert, and, what is sadder and more alarming, Solomon fell into idol worship in his own kingdom through women's charms.[†] This Jezabel too was leading God's servants astray to sin in lower and higher ways: by fornication against their bodies, and by idolatry against their Creator. How detestable is each part of the filthy mixture, the spiritual as well as the carnal fornication; how every creature endowed with reason should curse them when they are found in the faithful! Rightly are like causes found for each. Perhaps it would be more tolerable for humans—if only they did not both lead to such human wretchedness—for demons, also called incubi, to unite with them in lust, than for humans to have no fear of communicating with demons in idolatry. Nature made demons neither male nor female, but, despite their original condition, they love involvement in base physical pleasures, and are said to be dishonored by unnatural desire for intercourse with both sexes. We do not know whether their pleasure comes solely

[†]Re 2:20

[†]1 K 11:4

from the ruin of the people who consent to them, or whether they can themselves experience carnal pleasure.

We know a priest, for many years dean over other priests, whose good reputation is attested by neighbors and officials. When the Duke of Burgundy's sister was engaged to Roger the Magnificent, King of Sicily, this priest was living for a time in Sicily, and discovered there with perfect certainty what he still tells today.

A young man, a strong and skillful swimmer, was bathing in the sea with some companions of his own age about dusk of an evening when the moon was shining brightly. He heard some commotion near him, and supposed one of his friends was going to dunk him as swimmers do in sport. Strong and quick, he fell on him—and caught hold of a woman's hair! Holding what he believed was a woman, he plunged into the waves and drew her after him to the shore. He spoke to her and asked her certain things, but could not get a single word from her. He covered her with his cloak and took her home, and his mother gave her suitable clothes to wear.

She sat silently among them, but otherwise was grateful and obliging enough. After a while she responded to signs and nods, but never indicated her nationality, homeland, or the reason why she had come. She was among them eating and drinking,[†] apparently comfortable in all things, just as if she were visiting neighbors, relatives, and friends.[†] When asked if she believed in God and was a Christian, she nodded in the affirmative. Asked whether she wished to marry the young man, who had fallen deeply in love with her, she gratefully bowed her head and gave him her hand.

And what then? After a few days the mother gave in to her son's desire, and his friends agreed. The priest was summoned, and the betrothal was contracted, without a dowry, at the groom's word and the bride's silent assent. Then the party went to the church, and the wedding was celebrated in the usual manner. Love grew daily, and the newlyweds seemed more and more happy with each other. The woman conceived, and at length she bore a son. She was so affectionate with him that she never allowed the baby away from her lap or her bosom. She nursed him, washed and diapered and dressed him. As the days passed and the boy grew, her love for him seemed to grow too.

Meanwhile it happened that the young man on his way to work with a friend began to converse with him as he usually did. The friend told him that such a marriage was wrong, and that he was living with a phantasm and not a woman. Although the bishop, when they had presented themselves before him and he had inquired as carefully as he could into the details, had prudently agreed that this was not an unfortunate marriage, the young man's heart began to be more than usually moved at his friend's words, and to grow anxious over his marriage. Finally they agreed that he would return home to the privacy of their bedroom, and with words, eyes and threats—even at sword's point—demand that the woman with the child confess on the spot who she was. If she hesitated he would pretend that he was going to kill the boy, for he was sure she loved the child with all her heart.

He returned home, and carried out without delay what he had decided, what his friend had suggested. She trembled to see the sword hanging over her son's head, and immediately burst out: 'Woe to you, wretched man! You are losing a good wife since you force me to speak. I could be with you, and it could go well for you as long as you let me keep the silence enjoined on me. Now I am speaking to you, as you demand, but after I have spoken you will never see me again'. With this the woman vanished. The boy she left grew, and lived like the rest of them. He began to bathe often in the sea where once his mother had been found, until one day the fantasy woman seized the boy as he was swimming in the same waves, as many present witnessed. From that time on neither was seen again.

I wish this Jezabel were less harmful and would remain silent, or would likewise disappear while speaking her poisonous words. A demon seems to have appeared in a woman's form with the command not to speak in order to show the baleful talkativeness of women. It seems impossible that fantasies of this kind could produce real offspring. Hence the dead body of this boy was not washed up by the sea nor buried in the earth as would happen in accord with reason and nature if he had been a true human being. Although the fact that we heard this story told some time ago would seem to be against it, many agree to its truth.

In the diocese of Cologne a very famous and vast castle called the Nimmaium rises above the Rhine. Once when many princes were gathered there, and, some say, in the presence of the Emperor, a silver swan came pulling a little boat by a chain around its neck, and put into the shore. Everyone was astonished by so strange a thing, and rose up at the sight. A young unknown soldier sprang out, and the swan drew the boat away by the chain, just as it had brought it.

The soldier was found to be a good fighter, a thoughtful counselor, and an effective businessman; he was obedient to his commander, fierce against his enemies, liked by his companions, and happy among his friends. He married a noble wife, was enriched by her dowry and secured by her kindred. At length children were born, and after a long time spent residing in that same castle he caught a distant glimpse of his swan gliding toward him with the little boat and the chain. Without delay he got up and ran to the boat, got in, and was never seen again.

Many of his descendants went on to become nobles, and even today his large family remains and continues to grow. Our own diocese of Langres even now is said to have noblemen and lords of this military camp who are like a brood of vipers,[†] descendants of that serpent's stock. The father of their great-great-great-grandfather, or an even more remote ancestor, when he had penetrated into the remote places of the forest, met [the serpent] in the guise of a beautiful, well-dressed woman. He fell in love with her at first sight, seized her and took her with him, content with that dowry. He was betrothed by the church's ministers, since no one could object that they were related by blood or marriage. He had children by her, and for many days and years his great love made him forget that he did not know of his wife's parents or homeland.

The woman loved bathing, and frequented the bath. She never allowed herself to be seen naked even by servant girls, but, when everything was ready, she would send them away in order to remain alone in the room with the door bolted from inside. At last it happened that one of her servant girls, looking curiously through a hole in the wall, saw not a woman but a serpent twisting sinuously through the water. When the servant girl had seen her in such a state

many times, in her great astonishment she revealed the mystery of iniquity[†] to her lord.

12 Th 2:7

The husband grew afraid when he heard the word serpent, and was easily persuaded to believe that something was wrong, for he did not know his wife's origins. He waited for the right moment, and when he saw with his own eyes what he had heard with his ears, he was astounded. Knowing the old enmity between woman and serpent, he was aghast that a new covenant had been formed. He could not hide what he saw, but loudly burst in to destroy that room. But she disappeared, never to appear to him again; she did not remain, for she had been discovered in the form of a serpent.

Let no one complain or charge that I tell these tales for curiosity's sake or to offer examples worth following. The careful and faithful hearer should notice where our prayer is heading, and what our intention demands. I admit that I want to render lust hateful—for in such uncleanness the angels of Satan rejoice—and this to the end that the Christian may flee the lasciviousness so dear to demons, and detest the alliance with idolatry.

Perhaps the Jezabel of whom we were speaking did not persuade the servants of God to idolatry but to the eating of food sacrificed to idols. She cleverly led them into iniquity unaware, getting them accustomed to eating sacrificed foods, so that as they became more used to the idols, they could not profitably share the Lord's cup together with the cup of demons.[†]

11 Co 10:21

I gave her time to repent, but she is not willing to repent of her fornication.[†] Here we are given to understand that among the benefits of the divine loving-kindness we are to reckon a time of waiting, a capacity for repenting, and a postponement of chastisement. This grace is seen most starkly when it is taken away. A man breathing his last loudly begs for a delay, just until morning; he receives it, considers it to be nothing, and then goes on day and night as before, until the end suddenly comes. If we recall that each of our days could be our last, if we are apprehensive that each may be our last day, we come to realize how great is the gift of the Judge we await, and the capacity he gives us to do penance before he arrives. We also realize that we must take this opportunity seriously,

1Rv 2:21

neither neglecting it nor treating it as of little account. Once it is taken from us, no eagerness, or prayer, or argument, can bring it back.

How dear would that brief hour be to a wretched person whose existence is worthless and whom a long delay would not benefit. They claim that they will do serious penance, but the claim, though constant, is ineffective. No delay, no rebuke or correction can bring them to perform the penance which is in reality light, brief, and salutary. Groaning in anguish of spirit,[†] they will one day say of the elect: 'These are people we once held in derision—fools that we were! We thought their lives were madness'.[†] The second gift is rebuke, the third is correction, and we will take that up now.

But she is not willing to repent of her fornication. And behold, I will cast her on a bed,[†] and so on. The merciful Lord is patient with sinners, reproves the negligent, and punishes the unrepentant. He pretends to punish the faults of sinners to lead them to repentance. He reproves those who leave their offenses and his patience unnoticed in order to bring them to consider both things. As a last resort he brings physical pain on them to make them realize their state. We read in the second book of Maccabees: 'In the case of other nations the Lord waits patiently, that when the day of judgment comes he may punish them in the fullness of their sins. Not so with us, that with our sins reaching their height he may take vengeance on us. And so he never withdraws his mercy from us; and although he chastises his people, he does not forsake them'.[†]

These gifts are neither good nor evil, not less dangerous to the condemned than they are salutary to the elect. From the same gifts some are led to repentance and others to store up wrath for themselves.[†] Thus we should be zealous for the greater gifts,^{*} we should eagerly long for and pursue those gifts that bring a more sure hope of salvation. We should also notice in how many and various ways[†] people are chastised here below, in themselves or in what belongs to them in equal measure. So the Lord says about this fornicating woman, *I will cast her on a bed,*[†] a bed of pain in place of unchaste couches, that an hour's evil may make her forget her great wantonness. Or, as another translation has it, 'I will cast her into

mourning'.[†] The bed of pain suggests great affliction; mourning suggests grief of heart.

And those who commit adultery with her will be in very great distress unless they repent of their deeds. And I shall put her children to death.[†] Some of the impenitent learn nothing from punishment, but for others, who are more aware, it works together for salvation.[†] *And all the churches will know that I am the one who searches loins and hearts,* the one from whom no bodily pleasure or thought remains hidden.

And I shall give to each of you as your works deserve.[†] By these works and by their punishment he is making known to others that 'No matter how long I seem not to notice, I will leave no good deed unrewarded nor any evil deed unpunished'.

But to the rest of you at Thyatira I say.[†] Those whom the nefarious woman led astray into committing adultery and eating food sacrificed to idols with her, although they seemed to be at Thyatira, were not; they were destitute of true enlightenment, nor did they offer themselves a living sacrifice[†] to the Lord.

Those who do not hold this teaching,[†] the teaching of that impure and impious woman, a teaching filled with seduction and completely foreign to the truth. *Who have not known,* that is, favored, what some call the 'deep things of Satan'. This does not mean that there really are deep things but that some claim there are, that, as they talk among themselves or reflect on their doctrine alone, they magnify and extol them.

I will not lay any other burden upon you. Only hold fast to what you have until I come.[†] If we take all these things as spoken by the Son of God, perhaps he is promising to come at their final call, because then he will be present to his own when he calls them out of this world into his presence and the beatific vision. Nor is he placing a further burden on them, as when he called Peter to bear a cross and to imitate his own passion. When Peter inquired about this in reference to John and asked, 'What about him?' Jesus replied, 'So it is my wish that he remain until I come'.[†]

[†]luctum in place of lectum. Primasius, *Commentariorum super Apocalypsim beati Iohannis libri quinque* 1.1; PL 68:808C.

TW 5:3

TW 5:4

TRv 2:21-22

12 M 6:14-16

†Rm 2:5; Jm 5:3 Vulgate
*1 Co 12:31

†Heb 1:1

†Rv 2:22

†Rv 2:22-23

†Rm 8:28

†Rv 2:23

†Rv 2:24

†Rm 12:1

†Rv 2:24

†Rv 2:25

†Jn 21:21-22

1Rev 2:24

But *the rest of you at Thyatira*[†] can also be taken as spoken by John himself. In order that they may separate themselves from the wrong doctrines of the faithless, he is warning them to be content with what he previously taught until he should return. In the Spirit he foresaw that the gospel he would write would contain none of their teachings.

1Rev 2:26

And to the one who conquers,[†] and so on. While in visions of this sort there may be a variety of speakers, these words can only be attributed to the Son. Only one who conquers is crowned, and no one will obtain the triumph of victory unless he competes according to the rules.[†] Yet it seems that something further is promised one who *keeps his works until the end*, one not only working out his own salvation but zealous for perfection, who imitates the Saviour as well as he can. Salvation, victory, and life lie in the divine commandments; perfection lies in the counsels and examples.

12 Tim 2:5

Those following them, and keeping them *until the end*, are promised not only victory, which is for all the elect, but judiciary rank and authority as well. The Lord promised his followers, that is those keeping his works, 'You also will sit on twelve thrones, judging'[†]

1Mc 19:28

I will give him authority over the nations, and he will rule them with an iron rod, that is, with inflexible justice, *and they will be broken like a potter's jar*.[†] The potter has power to make from the same lump one vessel for noble and one for ignoble use.[†] Those who must be broken *will be broken* irreparably. In the present age he sets him over his church, that with his inviolable power—like a straight rod made of iron, which is stronger than any other metal—he may rule over the elect and break the condemned. Some people indeed are neither victors nor keepers of divine works, yet he tolerates them even though he does not move them forward. Of such people the prophet said, 'They have reigned but not through me; they set up princes, but I have not called them'.[†]

1Ho 8:4

1Rev 2:27

What follows, *even as I have received from my Father*,[†] shows that he proclaims the Father's glory in everything, and equals him in honor.

1Rev 2:28

11 Co 15:20,

23

14eb 11:1

And I will give him the morning star.[†] He is speaking of himself, the first-fruits[†] of those who have risen. This *morning star* can also be taken as faith, and as chastity. Faith is the conviction of things unseen and the substance of things hoped for.[†] Chastity belongs rather to

the future than to the present life, and anticipates the day of the Lord by its likeness to the children of the resurrection; chastity stands in opposition to the idolatry and fornication that the false prophet and seducer Jezabel counseled.

And since what the Son of God says to this Angel his Spirit says to his churches in the other letters, he adds, *Let anyone who has ears hear what the Spirit says to the churches*.[†] He is speaking not only of his commandments but also of counsels. That person has two ears who sings in mind and spirit, 'My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready!'[†]—ready not only to obey your precepts but to follow your counsels as well. And may the eternal Father grant us both through his only begotten Son, in their common Spirit, with whom he lives and reigns without end. Amen.

1Rev 2:29

1Psa 57:7, 108:1